

Rockcastle Karst Conservancy
General Meeting – March 7, 2021
Final Minutes

In Attendance 3/7/2021:

Directors: Mary Gratsch, Werner Jud were present onsite.
Janice Gott, Patrick Gibson and Gary O'Dell were present online.
(A quorum does exist.)

Others: Neena Jud was present. Patrick Gibson, Stephanie Suen, Josh Heinbuch, Jerry Brandenburg, Darryl Marsh, and Gary Bush were present online.

59th Meeting of the Rockcastle Karst Conservancy meeting was held at the Jud residence and online. Called to Order by Chair Mary Gratsch at 2:01 PM.

(Meeting Agenda at end of Minutes.)

Announcements:

Werner Jud submitted a letter on the part of RKC to Wildlife Acoustics, endorsing Kentucky Heartwood's grant request for a comprehensive acoustic bat survey in the Daniel Boone National Forest.

Officers: There were no changes in the members of the RKC Board of Directors this year, as Gary O'Dell and Werner Jud were re-nominated in December for another term. The Directors all wish to stay in their current positions.

MOTION: For the RKC officers to stay in their current positions: Chair: Mary Gratsch, Vice Chair: Patrick Gibson, Secretary: Janice Gott, Treasurer: Werner Jud, Open: Gary O'Dell (O'Dell, Jud, by acclaim).

Secretary's Report: (Submitted by J. Gott)

Read summary of Minutes of regular Meeting of 12/13/20, and the in-between meeting motion of 2/11/21.

MOTION: Motion to accept the minutes of the 12/13/20 general meeting as amended (Jud, Gibson 2nd, by acclaim).

IN-BETWEEN MEETING MOTION: In-Between Meeting Motion: To authorize a minor expenditure (no more than \$80) to change the web server to A2 Hosting (Gratsch, Gibson, 5-0-0).

Treasurer's Report: (Submitted by W. Jud)

1. RKC received a total of \$450 in individual contributions this quarter, and the \$2,000 Verschlage Grant came in. Membership renewal money has been coming in already. Membership renewals are due by March 31st, and can be paid by PayPal or mailing a check. RKC received a small amount from the Amazon Smile program. We have one new life member.
2. RKC has received over \$26,000 in targeted Sloans Valley Preserve Funds, which is more than the property purchase price, but does not yet cover the existing or anticipated improvements. Mary Gratsch could be paid back the final \$5,000 due on her loan.

3. A Sloan's Valley Preserve improvements fund has been created in the bookkeeping for continuing maintenance and improvements efforts.
4. Life membership funds: We could have taken a draw this winter for general funds out of the Life Membership funds, but with the shift in the fund to the NSF account we did not take one in 2020. It would make sense to take out an annual draw in March, to coincide with our membership drive. Sending in a deposit of new life memberships should also be done on some sort of regular basis. Quarterly would be good.
5. RKC financial audit: The last audit was in 2015. Bush, Gott, and perhaps Dennis Greene and Patrick Gibson will volunteer to get together with Werner and do an audit on the RKC financial records in the near future.

MOTION: To accept the Treasurer's Report and Life Member Fund Report as provided (Gott, O'Dell, by acclaim).

MOTION: To pay \$5,000 due to Mary Gratsch for the Sloans Valley Preserve purchase (Gott, Jud, 4-0-1, Gratsch abstained).

Committee Reports:

(A) Membership/Message Committee: (J. Gott)

1. A Winter email newsletter was composed and sent out by Gary Bush. Our webhost would not let him set up the mail out as desired, and MailChimp's free account did not have the functionality he wanted. He eventually sent it out through Google Groups. This saved a lot of money in printing and mailing. Gratsch thanked him for this effort. Bush appreciated that he had a lot of content, which made the process easy.
2. The target for the next newsletter will be June.
3. Bush will be changing the web server to A2 Hosting. Three groups want to join on it with us, which keeps the cost down. It is fast, and easier to do mailouts with. He asked how many mailboxes to set up (such as board@rkci.org, meetingsupportgroup@rkci.org). He can also set up position emails for redirect, such as GSPmanager@rkci.org.
4. The tri-fold flyer still needs an update. Rob Coomer has volunteered to update the inDesign program, in which he has the original. Gary Bush was unable to convert it using free software. We need to create verbiage for the two newer preserves, and update pictures. Gratsch will help with that.
5. 2021 Membership Drive: We need to send out renewal letters, and 15 people have already renewed, due to the newsletter. So the remainder of the non-life and non-sustaining membership should receive a letter, which is 40. We also reach out to members who have dropped off the list in the last two years. Beforehand, we should send them an email. "Renewal is easy, go to RKC.org and click on renew" Then, we should send a renewal postcard or letter to those we do not have emails for, asking for their email and, and include a link to the newsletter online. The Winter 2021 Newsletter has gone out through email to those who have been members within the last two years.

(B) GSP Committee: (Scott Pavey reporting)

1. Planning for Open House has started. Neena Jud sent out a questionnaire for Open House volunteers. Her feedback said the volunteers preferred a fall date, and Open House 2021 has been set for October 2-3, 2021.

2. There was flooding in Crooked Creek and the GSP grounds, but it has already been set mostly right this weekend. The hot tub and a port-a-potty had been moved, but have been re-set. Pat Hutson brought a bobcat down, which really helped.
3. COVID has been easing up, and visitors are returning.

(C) Misty Cave Committee: (S. Cain)

1. Sean sent the winter bat survey to the Board. He also put up a hibernaculum sign at the entrance and noticed some vandalism.

(D) Skylight Dome Committee: (Jerry Brandenburg & Thor Bahrman, Jerry Brandenerg reporting)

1. They have closed the gate, as someone tried to make it up the rutted road and slid down the hill, causing damage to the neighbor's utility pole. In conjunction with the new neighbor, Charlie, they have padlocked the gate. The road is unusable for any but off-road style vehicles. The water bars are still there, but not helping due to the poor condition overall. The County did come in with their equipment and pushed washed-out gravel off the highway and back up into the driveway.

(E) Cornhole Cave Committee: (M. Gratsch)

1. Gratsch has not been down there recently.

(F) Sloans Valley Preserve (Mary Gratsch reporting)

1. Mike Harrington has someone designing a donation tube for the entrance.
2. This year we will want a cost estimate for the kiosk proposal.
3. The management plan has made no progress.
4. A sign at the entrance should say you will enter the cave at your own risk. Mary will look into temporary signs for both Sloans entrances.

(G) Fundraising Committee:

1. Open house will not occur until the first weekend of October this year. Karst-O-Rama may be held in August.

(H) Acquisition Committee: (B. Dobbs)

1. Bob Dobbs drafted a letter for landowners, explaining how RKC could be interested in buying their property, or holding a conservation Easement on it.
2. Conservation Easement Committee – no report.

(I) NSS Preserves Program / MOU Committee: (Mary Gratsch)

1. Patrick Gibson has created an initial draft to start the discussion. No meeting yet.

Old Business:

- A. RKC now has 71 life members, so @ \$15 each this totals \$1,065 for this year's draw from the Life Membership Fund to the general fund. Werner will send a letter to NSF asking for this distribution for our general operating fund, along with a check for adding the most recent life member dues to the fund.
- B. Waivers are still buried in the back of the tractor barn.

New Business:

- A. Legacy Endowment Fund: Sean Cain has suggested that RKC create an official Legacy Endowment Fund. He noted that there are likely members who would denote directed contributions to RKC in their wills, but currently RKC has no way of knowing about their desires. It would be helpful to set up a record about promised future funds.

Next Meeting: The Summer meeting was set for Sunday, June 6th, 2021 at 2:00 p.m., location TBD.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Meeting Minutes prepared by Janice Gott, Secretary.

Action Items

1. 2021 Membership Drive letter – Gott
2. RKC Financial Audit – Jud, Bush
3. Create Sloans Valley Cave Preserve Management Plan – Harrington, Morgan, Gratsch
4. Sloans Valley Cave Preserve - sign of Kentucky Statute on Caves at entrance, and “Enter at Your Own Risk” sign
5. Sloans Valley logo – Brandi, Bush, Gratsch
6. Possible Coasters, T-shirts and other donation perks for Sloans
7. Tri-fold brochure update – Bush, Coomer, Gratsch
8. Database of waivers – Kevin Zachary, Gary Bush
9. Skylight Dome Preserve driveway repairs – Bahrman, Brandenburg
10. Conservation Easement Pamphlet – Dobbs, Gott
11. Sloans Valley Cave Preserve Donation tube
12. NSS Preserves Program MOU Committee
13. RKC Legacy Endowment Fund creation
14. Summer Newsletter – June target date



SPRING 2021 MEETING AGENDA
Sunday, March 7, 2021
GOTO MEETING - 2:00 P.M.

- **Call to Order – Mary Gratsch**
- A. Announcements**
 1. Elections – No Change in Board Members
 2. Officers
 3. Endorsement of Kentucky Heartwood to Wildlife Acoustics survey
- B. Secretary’s Report – Janice Gott**
 1. Minutes 12-13-20
 2. In-Between Meeting Motion: To authorize a minor expenditure (no more than \$80) to change the web server to A2 Hosting (Gratsch, Gibson, 5-0-0).
- C. Treasurer’s Report – Werner Jud**
 1. Sloans Valley Loan status
 2. Treasury Fund for Sloans Valley Improvements
 3. Annual Draw from Life Membership Fund - 2021
 4. Time for another RKC financial audit?
- D. Committee Reports**
 - A. Membership/Message Committee – Janice Gott**
 - a. Winter email newsletter – Thank you Gary Bush
 - b. Web Server change to A2 hosting - Bush
 - c. RKC tri-fold flyer revision
 - d. 2021 Membership Renewal Drive
 - B. GSP Committee – Scott Pavey**
 - C. Misty Committee – Sean Cain**
 - D. Skylight Committee – Thor Bahrman/Jerry Brandenburg**
 - E. Cornhole Committee – Mary Gratsch**
 - F. Sloans Valley Preserve Committee – Mike Harrington & Joe Morgan**
 - a. Signage
 - b. Management Plan
 - G. Fundraising Committee Mary Gratsch**
 - a. Open House
 - H. Acquisition Committee – Bob Dobbs**
 1. Acquisition Report – Bob Dobbs
 2. Conservation Easement Committee Report – Janice Gott
 - I. NSS Preserves Program / MOU Committee – Gratsch, Gibson, Jud**
- **Old Business**
 - Waiver Consolidation
- **New Business**
- **Next Meeting Date - Motion to Adjourn**